

Green party unveils its plan to tackle the climate crisis; Leader says cross-party co-operation is needed to prevent catastrophe

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As MPs debated competing "climate emergency" declarations in the House of Commons Thursday, the Green party released an urgent - and as yet uncoded - blueprint to transform the Canadian economy, abandon partisan political divisions in a manner not seen since the Second World War, and overcome a looming catastrophe that is "as dire as the loss of civilization."

The Green climate plan - dubbed "Mission: Possible" - would double Canada's emissions reduction target to 60 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. It would halt all new fossil fuel development in the country, pursue a nationwide shift toward non-nuclear renewable energy, and create "millions" of jobs by retrofitting all buildings in Canada so that they're carbon neutral over the next 11 years.

It also calls for the creation of a new "survival cabinet" composed of members from all parties to direct the climate action plan from the heart of government, a proposal modelled on the wartime cabinets of William Lyon Mackenzie King and Winston Churchill.

"We're saying to all Canadians: This is something we have to do together,"

Green party Leader Elizabeth May told reporters on Parliament Hill Thursday morning. "We cannot continue to pretend that we are in a status-quo world where significant changes aren't coming. Canadians have more in common than we have in difference. We have to pull together," she said. "This is all hands on deck."

The 20-point plan came as the NDP and governing Liberals proposed duelling motions in the Commons to declare an emergency in the face of global warming that federal scientists report has already increased temperatures in Canada two times higher than the world average.

Buoyed by the party's spate of electoral wins - most recently last week, when incoming Nanaimo-Ladysmith MP Paul Manly became just the second Green candidate ever elected to the House of Commons - the Greens are now calling for all-party co-operation in the fight against climate change.

May, who was speaking as Environment Minister Catherine McKenna tabled the Liberal emergency motion in the House, argued more needs to be done if Canada is to seriously confront such an emergency. She pointed to the October report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which called for "unprecedented changes in all aspects of society" if the world is to keep global warming below the Paris Agreement target of 1.5 degrees by 2100.

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"We've now been delivered the sobering news that ought to get leaders to sober up. We're facing something as dire as the loss of civilization," May said. "We want to set the bar where it needs to be."

The Green vision maintains the Liberal government's carbon-price plan, which imposes a minimum levy on fuel equivalent to \$20 per tonne this year and rising to \$50 per tonne in 2022, but the Greens say they would continue to hike the levy each year beyond that.

They pledge to cancel all fossil-fuel development, including already-approved projects like the \$40-billion LNG Canada export terminal set for construction on the coast of B.C.

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